

TWO WEEKS

in Todi

FAQs, Answered

Do I have to be a Speak! student to attend Two Weeks in Todi?

Absolutely not! Though many of our *in-the-know* Italian students at our Virginia-based language and culture center have attended in the past, we welcome any lover of Italian language, culture and village life to join us for this unique immersion experience in Umbria. We do recommend a few “familiarization” lessons or a beginner’s/traveler’s course with us before departure, but it is not required. It really depends upon the individual, and we’d be happy to advise – and educate – accordingly!

I would love to learn Italian in Todi, but my spouse/partner would prefer not to commit to the 2 week course. Is there something he/she can do in Todi without taking the Italian classes each morning?

Yes! We have a special “culture-only” price (Group B) which includes lodging and all of our organized group cultural activities. Many spouses/partners who don’t take the Italian course enjoy food shopping, clothes washing, cappuccino sipping and exploring the town from tip to toe. We can also arrange a one-on-one Umbrian cooking course (for one or both weeks) with a local home-cook in the mornings, should that be of interest (additional charge).

What are the language classes like and how do they fit into my daily rhythm of life in an Umbrian hill town?

Italian lessons at La Lingua, La Vita begin at 9am and end at 1pm each weekday, with a 20 minute break at around 10:50am – great time to get a second coffee or pastry at the bar/pasticceria downstairs, or do a quick e-mail check. You will be placed in the class that best suits your level, based on a short evaluation “test” and, if you’ve had a class or three at Speak!, on your instructor’s recommendation. Classes range in size from 2-8 students. Although the method is always conversational, the goal of the first 2 hours is normally to introduce and practice grammar points, while the second half of the morning strives to have you apply these points through games and conversation activities. After class, it’s time for lunch! The afternoons are spent either on one of our cultural activities or excursions, or just doing as you wish in Todi (exploring, doing homework, shopping, sketching...).

What kinds of cultural activities will be organized for us, and which are included?

Our cultural activities aim to give you a sense of the history, cuisine, wine, art, festivals, traditions and both natural and urban beauty of Todi and the region of Umbria. Five or six activities will be included fully in the tuition, others will be optional, possibly spontaneous and incur a separate fee. Activities range from an introductory artisan and shopping walk around Todi with Christina to a wine tasting trip to Montefalco to a cooking class and dinner to numerous walking tours of splendid towns like Spoleto, Perugia and Assisi. (See our menu of 2008 Cultural Activities to get an idea). Although there is always a tour of Todi (with a local guide), a cooking class and a few excursions to Umbrian towns, other activities fluctuate based on the season (local festivals, harvests) and the interests of the participants. For instance, if we have many art lovers we might spend a morning at the museum in Perugia. If photography is a passion, we might organize a special photo-excursion to a nearby town or site (planning time of day/light accordingly). If we are in Todi during the Spoleto Festival, we might choose to attend a concert or dance performance together – and so on. We want to expose you to as much of Umbria's wonders as we can, but we also want you to relax, to breathe, to have time and energy to soak it all in instead of rushing from place to place.

Apartment or host family – which is best for me/us?

Living with an Italian host family (you'll have your own bedroom and bathroom) gives you the opportunity to practice your Italian, eat some amazing meals and make new and lasting bonds with the locals. All families live in the city center and are famous for their hospitality! If you live with a family, they will normally prepare your coffee and breakfast for you in addition to one meal per day that you will eat together. Many prefer to eat lunch with their host family and dine out and socialize with others in the group in the evenings. Many couples, friends and individuals have enjoyed staying with Todi families. If you are intrigued, but shy, we could see if another attendee would be interested in staying with the same host family (separate bedrooms!). Host families can range from a professional couple in their 40s with youngish children to a married couple or widow in their 60s with older children who pop in and out from time to time.

Independent apartments are best for those wishing to have total privacy and independence while living in Todi. Although they vary in terms of size and exact location, all are in the city center and within a 10-12 minute walking distance from the school (though many are just 2-3 minutes away). All apartments are fully equipped in terms of kitchen, bath, TV, laundry. You will need to supply basic things if they run out, such as: toilet paper, laundry soap, dish detergent, etc. Apartments are wonderful if you love to shop and cook! Though, of course, Todi is famous for its cuisine and boasts numerous wonderful restaurants. Apartments are also great for socializing, and many participants have enjoyed inviting others to their "place" for prosecco at sunset or for a light supper.

I'm considering attending by myself – will I be the only single?

Definitely not! Italy appeals to everyone – young professionals and seniors, couples and singles, men and women, shoppers and naturalists – and *Two Weeks in Todi* offers everyone the opportunity to live and learn in Todi. The setting, classes and activities make it easy for those new to Italy (or to Speak! Language Center) to meet new friends – both in our group and beyond. Classes at La Lingua, La Vita will include students from around the world and host families will provide further orientation and conversation. Our outings and spontaneous lunches, dinners or coffee breaks in town provide a chance to share stories and impressions with each other as we go along. Christina does her best to make sure everyone has a good time, and so does everyone at La Lingua, La Vita!

How will I get from the Rome airport to Todi, and what will happen once I get there?

We can help arrange transportation from the airport to Todi. There are several buses per day that travel from the Rome airport (Fiumicino) to Todi (approx. 3 hour trip). We can also arrange a private car or shared private shuttle bus for those traveling together or those landing around the same time on our arrival date (morning of Sat. June 20). Once we know your arrival time and location, we will alert your landlord or host family. They will meet you at the agreed-upon location and take you right to your home away from home in Todi. You will have a chance to rest and possibly meet others for a light supper and glass of wine. On Sunday afternoon, we will meet for our walking tour of Todi. We will have our local travel agents at Peace Frogs Travel find the best flight for our dates (usually Dulles-Rome) should a few of you wish to travel together. Normally a group of 5-8 individuals end up flying into Rome within an hour or two of each other and are able to share ground transport to Todi at a time and location (the café!) which Christina sets up and communicates to all. Although air travel and Todi transport are not officially “included”, we do our best to let you know the options and you can be sure that someone will be waiting for you in Todi when you arrive!

How can I stay in touch with friends and family back home? Will I have internet and phone access?

It is definitely not as easy to stay in touch via phone and internet while in Todi, however this is mostly a positive for those wishing to get away from work and internet in order to plunge fully into the Italian experience. In terms of internet, there is a computer available during school hours (Mon-Friday 9am-6pm) to check e-mail and the like. The school is a wi-fi zone and there are several “hot-spots” in town should you decide to bring your portable. Apartments are generally not equipped with telephones or internet/wi-fi. If you wish to call home, we suggest either renting a cell-phone (if your U.S. cell isn't tri-band – usually only T-Mobile/AT+T work in Italy) or, much cheaper, purchasing an international phone calling card, which you can use from any land-line (such as at the

school, your host family). Christina Ball and someone from La Lingua, La Vita (Italian school) will always be reachable via cell phone in case of emergency. Of course, you will be welcome to give these numbers as well as those of your host family to your friends and family as contact numbers. Italy is very much a cell-phone culture, though in Todi internet is not as common as it is back in the States.

What's the weather like in Todi in late June/early July and in September?

Todi is a hilltown located in central Italy. Temperatures in mid-late June range from 65-85 degrees Fahrenheit, but as summer approaches temps are more around 75-85. Of course, if conditions are rainy and/or windy, you'll need an appropriate jacket! Similarly in mid-late September, we could get some hot and sunny days and a few cool and rainy ones. It's always best to pack a light sweater or two and a rain/wind jacket or fleece. The most important item is certainly a pair of comfortable shoes. Most do well with casual or dressy-casual attire for the most part in Todi though, as the world knows, Italians are more elegant overall – they even iron their blue jeans! Why not take the opportunity to have some fun with fashion while in Italy? Leave room in your suitcase should you wish to bring a pair of shoes or a sweater home with you. More packing – and shopping – advice available from Christina as needed!

Please let course creator and guide Christina know if you have additional questions !



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